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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PHNOM PENH 000315

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [CB](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: CAMBODIA AND NEXT STEPS ON BURMA

REF: STATE 20000

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Margaret McKean; Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Ambassador called on MFA Secretary of State Ouch Borith on February 22 at the latter's request, and used the occasion to raise reftel demarche points regarding Burma. Borith, however, was more eager to discuss North Korean affairs, and related his recent discussions with Japanese officials in Tokyo on abduction issues. He mentioned that the Iranians have again invited a Cambodian delegation to Tehran (the MFA again declined). The MFA official apologized for continued RGC nonresponsiveness on the USG-proposed shipboarding agreement, and complained that the South Koreans have indicated their desire to compete for the rotational chair on the UNSC in 2013 that the Cambodians are seeking. End Summary.

Burma

¶2. (C) On February 22, the Ambassador and Pol/Econ Chief met with MFA Secretary of State Ouch Borith, and the Ambassador raised the points outlined in reftel regarding USG proposed next steps. Borith was noncommittal on the appointment of a Special Envoy but assured us that the RGC remains committed to helping on the issue of Burma. He noted that Prime Minister Hun Sen will be visiting Burma in May or June, and reiterated the PM's suggestion that his government and the USG discuss Burma in greater detail beforehand. He said that the RGC would welcome USG suggestions for topics of discussion and requests that Hun Sen should make to the regime. The Ambassador thanked Borith, adding that the upcoming visit by EAP DAS Eric John would be an opportune time to share views on the PM's trip.

North Korea, PSI, UNSC Seat

¶3. (C) Borith was much more expansive on the issue of North Korea, having recently returned from a visit to Russia and Japan, where he had learned of recent developments surrounding the Six-Party Talks. Borith noted that Japanese officials remain adamant that the GOJ will not normalize relations with North Korea unless the abduction issue is resolved and a full accounting of those abducted is provided to the GOJ. Borith said that while progress on the North Korean nuclear issue must be encouraged, it is impossible to trust the North Korean leadership.

¶4. (C) The USG-proposed shipboarding agreement, explained Borith, remains under discussion within the RGC. The MFA official apologized for the delay in providing a response, saying that there is little expertise or understanding of the

legal concepts contained in the text. Pol/Econ Chief responded that the Embassy had learned of a planned PSI experts meeting in New Zealand, which could afford an opportunity for USG officials to discuss the draft agreement with the RGC in greater depth. Borith said that a full discussion would be welcome, adding that Cambodia is prepared to cooperate on any interdictions related to WMD.

15. (C) Turning to Cambodia's bid for a rotational seat on the UNSC in 2013, Borith told us that the South Korean government had informed the MFA that South Korea would also seek the seat, and asked that Cambodia consider their bid in the spirit of friendly competition. Borith said that Cambodia had been aware that Bhutan was also seeking the seat, but the news of South Korea's entry was unwelcome. He explained that Cambodia has withdrawn an earlier bid for a rotational seat in 2000-2001 in favor of South Korea. Moreover, the South Koreans had already approached the UN Secretariat before informing the Cambodian government.

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Borith said that Cambodia has already been assured of support from 35 countries, and hoped that the USG would also support Cambodia's candidacy. The Ambassador promised to convey Cambodia's request to Washington.

Iran

16. (C) Borith told us that the Iranian Ambassador based in Hanoi paid him a call on February 21 and asked for the Cambodian government's position vis-a-vis the Iranian nuclear issue. The Iranian Ambassador requested that the RGC send a delegation to visit Tehran to learn more about the Iranian government's policy on nuclear issues. Borith said that this was not the first time the GOI has invited the RGC for a

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visit. Borith said that the RGC lacks the finances for such a visit, and told the Iranian Ambassador that it would not be possible.

Comment

17. (C) We would welcome Department guidance on what we should recommend to PM Hun Sen regarding Burma. We would suggest developing some briefing material on the various issues of concern to the USG (political prisoners, treatment of ethnic minorities, child soldiers, etc.) that could be shared with the PM's office in advance. We could also have any briefing material translated into Khmer, so that the PM would be well briefed in advance of any meeting. End Comment.
MUSSOMELI